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UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 001166

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR OES/IHB - P. MURPHY AND D. WILUSZ  
DEPT PLEASE PASS TO NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE  
DEPT PLEASE PASS TO CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL  
HHS FOR OFFICE OF GLOBAL HEALTH AFFAIRS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [SOCI](#) [PREL](#) [AMED](#) [CASC](#) [AR](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH ARGENTINA'S HEALTH MINISTER

[1](#)1. ACTION REQUEST - See paras two and six.

[1](#)2. Summary: The Ambassador, accompanied by ESTH Couns, met on October 25 with Argentina's Health Minister Juan Manzur and Vice-Minister Jaime Lazovski. Minister Manzur expressed his appreciation for U.S. cooperation on H1N1 and shared his ministry's experience in controlling the outbreak with the Ambassador. She, in turn, expressed her gratitude for the help his office had provided to the Center for Diseases Control (CDC), as CDC prepares to deal with H1N1 during our winter flu season. Manzur also highlighted his cooperation with Bolivia and Paraguay on dengue fever, expected to resurge this coming austral summer. He mentioned his excellent meeting with the Director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in late September in Washington and shared his plan to create a similar institute in Argentina. Noting that President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner fully supports it, he requested the Ambassador's assistance in enlisting the NCI to support the project. He also expressed interest in inviting HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius to the cancer institute's inauguration, tentatively set for March 2010. The Ambassador pledged to work on both counts. Post requests Department's assistance in contacting NCI and HHS to follow up on these requests (See Para 6.) End Summary.

Lessons learned from H1N1 outbreak  
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[1](#)3. Minister Manzur stressed that Argentine health authorities had learned a lot from the H1N1 outbreak. They had shared their findings with physicians from the Center for Diseases Control (CDC) who were in-country for several months to monitor the outbreak. Manzur thanked the USG for the donation of 150,000 doses of Tamiflu provided through the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO). He noted that H1N1 had spread very rapidly, unlike the seasonal flu, but that the epidemic was essentially over now in Argentina. The Health Ministry had taken several critical measures, he said, which had helped to control the virus. With H1N1 representing more than 92% of all flu cases, health authorities had provided Tamiflu free of charge to all patients exhibiting flu symptoms within 48 hours of the appearance of these symptoms. Communication about the importance of personal hygiene, in-house isolation of H1N1 cases, and the early start of the winter vacations for schools had helped in controlling the spread of the virus. Manzur also highlighted the GOA's focus on high-risk groups, such as pregnant women and immune-deficiency patients, who were authorized paid leave during the three-week peak of the outbreak.

Multilateral cooperation on dengue fever  
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[1](#)4. Manzur said that 100 million people worldwide get dengue fever annually and noted that there had been 26,000 cases in Argentina this year, spread throughout 14 provinces. Communication on good practices and hygiene was the key strategy to prevent the spread of

the disease, he said. He pointed out that these diseases know no borders and highlighted his cooperation with the health ministers of bordering Bolivia and Paraguay to undertake joint actions.

Assistance request to set up national cancer institute  
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¶5. Manzur stressed that uterine and breast cancer in young women in poor areas is a serious problem in Argentina, one that could be mitigated with better education and screening. He recalled his excellent meeting with the Director of the National Cancer Institute in Washington in late September and shared with the Ambassador his plan to set up a national cancer institute in Argentina. He noted that President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner fully supports this initiative. He asked for the Ambassador's help in obtaining NCI's assistance to set up this cancer institute. He pointed out that NCI's experience in public awareness and screening campaigns would be invaluable to Argentina. Manzur also inquired whether the Ambassador could assist with an invitation to HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius to come to Buenos Aires for the inauguration of the national cancer institute, expected for March 2010. The Ambassador pledged her assistance on both counts.

¶6. ACTION REQUEST: Post requests Department's assistance in contacting NCI and HHS to follow up on Health Minister Manzur's requests.

MARTINEZ